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Dear friends, dear family, and dear parish community,

thank you for being here to honour the life of my mother, Máiréad O’Connell—our Mags—who was born on the 3rd of November, 1957, and who passed away peacefully at the age of 66.

I stand here as her daughter, one of the two she raised with a steady hand and a gentle heart.
To me, she was a loving mother, my steady anchor and gentle guide.
To many of you, she was the same—quietly present, utterly dependable, and full of a kindness that did not ask to be noticed.

Mags began in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, the landscape of her childhood stitched with fields, sea wind, and neighbourly ways.
She trained as a nurse in Cork University Hospital, and it suited her—head clear, hands steady, and a deep belief that dignity is not a luxury but a right.
In the 1980s she moved to Dublin, where she devoted more than thirty-five years to caring for patients, mentoring younger nurses, and lending her energy to community health outreach.
She did these things without fuss, without fanfare, always with the emphasis on people, never on herself.

At home, she and Dad—Patrick—shared forty-one years of marriage.
For Siobhán and me, that home was a place of welcome.
It didn’t matter if you arrived expected or not: the door opened, the kettle went on, and the conversation began where it needed to.
She became Nana, adored by three grandchildren who knew instinctively that her lap was a safe harbour and her stories were soft places to land.
And to her brother Declan and her sister Aileen, she was fiercely loyal—someone who turned up, phoned back, remembered the small things that say, “You

matter.”

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When I think of her, I see Inchydoney beach on a windy Sunday.
Coats zipped high, hair whipped across our faces, we’d walk until our cheeks were pink.
Then home for hot chocolates and slices of her famous brown bread, still warm, with that nutty crust she somehow always got just right.
Those afternoons taught us something she never had to state aloud: the ordinary can be rich if it’s shared with care.

She was defined by small, steady acts that carried great love.
A hand on a shoulder in a hospital corridor.
A note left by the kettle reminding us to bring a scarf.
A quiet joke offered at just the right moment—because she was quietly funny—easing the tightness in a long day.
She did not complain.
Even when life presented its knottier threads, she would take a breath, make a plan, and get on with it.

There were delights she never gave up:
baking that made the whole house smell like home,
tending her window boxes—which, no matter the season, found a way to bloom,
her rosary on evening walks, one foot in front of the other, prayers keeping pace with the light fading on the road,
and, of course, cheering Cork in the GAA—loyal to the red and white through sunshine and squalls.

Her colleagues will remember a nurse who could calm a room without raising her voice.
She mentored younger nurses not by speeches but by example—how to listen, how to advocate, how to respect the person in the bed and the family at the bedside.
She believed that neighbourliness is a practice, not a sentiment, and she lived it—checking in, dropping by, doing what needed to be done.

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What will we miss?
Her warm hugs waiting at the door.
The immediate lift of the kettle and the comfort that came with it.
The calm wisdom she offered without judgement—how she could turn a tangle into something you could hold and handle.

Today we bring our grief into this Funeral Mass, and we set it within the faith Mags carried steadily all her life.
It shaped her values—compassion, dignity, and the certainty that God meets us in the ordinary when we do small things with great love.
She asked for the hymn Be Thou My Vision.
It is right for her—clear, steady, unshowy; a prayer for guidance from the quiet centre she returned to every day.

To Dad—Patrick—thank you for the years of partnership that were the ground beneath all our feet.
To Siobhán and me, and to her grandchildren, she leaves a way of being: start with kindness, listen before speaking, put on the kettle.
To Declan and Aileen, the bond remains—rooted in shared beginnings, carried now in shared stories.
And to all gathered here, she offers a simple legacy: keep faith, care for one another, and don’t overlook the power of a small, faithful act.

If you want to find her in the days ahead, you will.
You’ll find her in the sound of the sea on a windy Sunday, in a loaf cooling on the rack, in a window box that somehow flowers when you need colour most.
You’ll find her whenever someone takes a breath, softens a tone, and chooses dignity for another person.

After Mass, our family invites you to the reception in the parish hall to share a memory of Mags.
Your stories will help us carry her forward, not as a statue on a pedestal, but as a living thread woven into our daily lives.

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Mum, Mags, thank you.

For the steadfast love that never made a show of itself.

For the laughter that arrived just when it was needed.

For the wisdom that found words only after it had listened.

May the Lord whom you trusted be your vision now.

May perpetual light shine upon you.

And may we honour you by doing, in the ordinary hours of our days, small things with great love.

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